

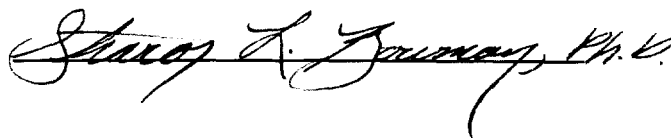
The Relationship between Role Models and Plans for Higher Education of  
African American Men

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon L. Bowman, Ph.D.".

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## Abstract

This study provides information about the primary role model of African American men in college and examines the influences between role models and their post-graduate plans. The study surveys 94 African American men currently enrolled at Ball State University. The questions ask about their education and their role models. Frequencies and cross-tabs were used to analyze and compare the data. Results suggest that there is a relationship between post-graduate plans and the frequency of interaction with role models. Results also suggest that African American college men typically have role models that are similar in gender, race and have some kind of family relation. The research examines successful college African American men with the intent to help offset some of the negative images of African American men.

## The Relationship between Role Models and Plans for Higher Education of African American Men

In the past, African American men have been described as an "endangered species" (Assibey-Mensah, p. 249, 1997; Gibbs, p. 3, 1989; Wilson, p. 1, 2000). This title came from the deteriorating social, educational, and economic status of African American men. These negative patterns have been detrimental to the advancement of African American men. Subsequently, the future direction of African American men has been distorted by a fatal series of negative stereotypes, low expectations, and lack of opportunities. African American men are commonly stereotyped as immoral, lazy, violent, mentally deficient, sexually fixated, overly athletic, and ravenous criminals (Hare & Hare, 1984, as cited in Blake & Darling, 1994). Invariably, these perceptions hinder the progress of African American youth. Claude Steele (1997) calls this the "stereotype threat" (p. 614). These young people become "threatened" by the prospect of being judged or conforming to these stereotypes, which can have an adverse effect on their future achievements. Even for those who do not assume these stereotypical behaviors, the pressures and frustrations of overcoming such barriers persist. Estimates suggest that 51% of African American children can be considered at high-risk (Dryfoos, 1991). Dryfoos defines "high risk" as children who "will never be equipped to enter the labor force, parent effectively, or participate in the political process" (p.630). She goes on to suggest, "no society can flourish if one quarter of the youth are dysfunctional" (Dryfoos, 1991, p.630). If we accept this as truth, with more than half of African American youths

considered “high risk,” then the entire African American community is in danger of deteriorating.

In an attempt to counteract the social harm to African American men, the purpose of the present study is to generate positive information about African American men. Although information will be presented about the difficulties of African American men, it is only intended to present obstacles that African American men are likely to encounter and demonstrate the lack of examination and information about successful African American men.

#### Dilemmas of the African American male

The condition of the African American man in contemporary American society is very critical. According to Dr. Marvin Wilson (2000), “Black males are more likely to be killed in a violent act, more likely to drop out of high school and more likely to be incarcerated than enroll in college” (p.1). The very notion that the status of the African American man is potentially more deconstructive than constructive warrants the study of their situation. This portion of the research will describe some of the detrimental issues that concern African American men.

#### Unemployment and Underemployment

Unemployment affects a wide variety of areas regarding African American men and his community. According to Anderson (1995), the lack of gainful employment opportunities not only instigates poverty, but it also deprives young men of the traditional American way of proving their manhood. In addition, unemployment has been found to correlate with suicide, mistrust, anxiety, mental

and physical problems, and marital instability (Daniels, 1986; Joe, 1987 as cited in Blake & Darling, 1994).

The employment rate of African American men has steadily decreased over the past 20 years. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (1999), the employment rate has decreased from 76% in 1970 to 69% in 1998. On the other hand, African American women's employment rate has increased from 49% to 63% during the same time period. Furthermore, it is projected that in the year 2006 the men's rate will have decreased to 65%. At the same time, the suicide rate has increased, making it the third leading cause of death among African American men ages 15-24 in 1998 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2000). Actually, the suicide rate is now higher per 100,000 resident population for African American men, at 15.0, than for Caucasian men, at 11.6.

When compared to their Caucasian counterparts, the prospects of having a successful and rewarding career are considerably lower for African Americans. African American men with a bachelor's degree earn on average \$6,000 less than Caucasian men with the same degree. Also, they earn almost \$2,000 less than Hispanic men with a bachelor's degree (U.S. Bureau Labor Statistics, 1999). In 1998, the unemployment rate for African Americans was double that of Caucasians. Moreover, for the majority that are employed, they hold subordinate positions that lack security and advancement opportunities. According to Joe (1987, as cited in Blake & Darling, 1994), when society is in economic crisis these positions (e.g. factory jobs, general construction, etc.) are the first to be eliminated.

When examining this information, one may begin to ask why? Why is the number of young African American men decreasing in the labor force? And, why are those with jobs getting fewer benefits than their Caucasian counterparts? Numerous attempts have been made to identify the factors that account for these discrepancies. In part, the first question is answered by the second. Young African American men are cognizant of the restrictions and lack of incentives available when pursuing a career (Wilkinson, 1995). As a result, African American men become disinterested in the job market. The seemingly uncertain rewards for continuing higher education appear to be more costly in comparison to other more immediate means of obtaining money, such as drug dealing.

Another factor that has been found to contribute to unemployment is education. "Youth employment rates are inextricably linked to educational attainment" (Gibbs, 1989, p.15). According to Williams (1982, as cited in Gibbs 1989), the lack of a high school diploma is highly correlated to unemployment, low wages, job instability, and welfare dependency. Today, when an adult lacks the basic credential essential for securing a career and financial stability, he or she will most likely be unable to secure a stable place in society.

#### Crime Rates and Incarceration

The criminal justice system has been the one of the longest and largest threats to African American men. It has served as the legal avenue to reinforce the stereotypes of African American men and make them seem a reality. For instance, African American men make up 45.7% of the total inmate population, whereas Caucasians constitute only 33% (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).

“Even though the justice system has been a long major feature of the life cycle for many Black men, never before have we had a period in which such a substantial portion of the community has come under the control of the system” (Mauer, 1994, p. 82). Mauer discusses a critical issue regarding the causes and effects of being arrested and sentenced. In addition to being victims of racism, African Americans are at an economic disadvantage, which contributes to the disparities. With increasing negative exposure by the media, it may be implied that African American men are more likely to be arrested and prosecuted..

The percent of African American men murder offenders increased from 14.5% in 1984 to 28.8% in 1997. The number of African American men murder victims also increased from 8.2% to 16.9%. However, for Caucasian men, murder offenses have remained relatively the same, increasing only from 17.7% to 18.4% and murder victims from 9% to 10.1% in the same time period (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999). The number one cause of death for African American men ages 15-24 is homicide at an astounding rate of 96.5 per 100,000 resident population, while for Caucasian men the rate is only 7.6 per 100,000 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2000).

In brief, the criminal justice system takes an additional toll on the progress of African American men. “For the young Afro-American men caught up in the system, it is clear that their prospects for engaging in a productive career and family life will be postponed and diminished by their involvement in the system” (Mauer, 1994, p. 83). This impediment is an additional obstacle African American men must overcome to advance in society. African American men who have



been arrested and served jail time will have more difficulties finding a job, getting married, getting an education, and continuing to avoid the criminal justice system. This only adds to the already existing odds against achievement.

### Educational Struggles

The high school dropout rate for African American men has actually decreased over time. The high school completion rate for African American men has increased from 65.8% in 1990 to 75.2% in 1998 (Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1999). However, the college enrollment and completion rate has not increased by a similar significant amount. In 1998, the enrollment for African American men in institutions of higher education was only 5.1%. Since 1980, this enrollment percentage has fluctuated, rising and falling from 5.2%, its highest in 1994, to its lowest of 3.8% in 1989. However there has been a steady increase in African American women's enrollment rates, from 5.1% in 1980 to 7.7% in 1998, consistently surpassing the men (Digest of Educational Statistics, 2000). Furthermore, only 14% of African American men ages 22-24 are currently enrolled in school, while for African American women to Caucasian men and women enrollment populations range from 25%-27%.

According to Davis (1994), those African American men who do enroll in college disproportionately represent students who withdraw, have low academic performance, and have negative college experiences. When compared to other groups the dilemmas of African American men in education become more obvious. African American men earned only 6.7% of bachelor's degrees conferred by higher education institutions in 1996-1997 (U.S. Department of

Education, 1999). African Americans had the highest gender discrepancy within their racial group, as African American women earned 9.6% of bachelor's degrees, a 3% difference. In other racial and ethnic groups, Caucasian men outnumber their women in earning bachelor's degrees by about 2.5%, Hispanic women outnumber their men by 0.5%, Asian American men outnumber their women by only 1%, and Native American women were ahead by just 0.1% (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Obviously, the trend among African Americans is atypical of present social and educational patterns in American society, wherein men outnumber women by a small margin or the percentages within groups are almost equal. This discrepancy suggests a disinterest in higher education among African American men. Washington and Newman (1991) suggest that this lack of motivation for educational achievement is created by the many negative experiences prior to and during college. Instead, African American men follow the lead of their same-race peers, because promises in educational pursuits become uncertain.

### Need for Study

Once again, it must be stated that, given the overtly negative tone of existing literature, the purpose of this study is not to mull over negative circumstances faced by African American men. These issues for African American men should not be viewed as explicit traits, but as problems in need of solutions. This study intends not solely to shift the perspective from bad to good but examine factors that contribute to the achievement of African American men so that the preexisting problems can appropriately be addressed. Certainly, part

of the solution to overcoming these negative ideals begins by focusing on the positive. Yet, the ultimate objective should not simply be to change perspectives but change behaviors as well. These behaviors included increasing college enrollment, ensuring college completion and success in higher education, decreasing the number of violent crimes committed, and increasing employment and pay rates for African American men as they become more positive contributors to society.

#### Lack of Study on Successful African American Men

As previously cited, there is a voluminous amount of information on the despondency of African American men. "Studies have disproportionately focused on factors related to school dropout and underachievement rather than those related to high levels of academic achievement" (Maton, Freeman, Hrabowski, & Grief, 1998, p. 640). It seems that populations of deviant African American men have been over-studied, over-analyzed, and over-generalized, while the successful populations of African American men have been overlooked. Therefore, it is the goal of this study to focus on factors related to school enrollment and achievement of African American men. The successful populations must be considered to understand the needs of African American men. For, if successful populations are never understood, then how can we identify the positive influences younger generations need to be successful?

Little attention is paid to African American men who are advancing or in the position to advance in society. Therefore, young African American male adolescents may lack exposure to these groups and many times are unable to

recognize education as a possible avenue for future success. Those few that are in the media, aside from professional athletes and rap artists, are viewed as unusual cases. In Assibey-Mensah's study (1997) of the role models of African American male high school students, none of them indicated an educator as their role model. He went on to explain that "Their lack of interest in choosing academics or educators as role models may be explained by their lack of information on the cadre of African American males in academia" (pg. 245). Instead, they indicated athletes/sports figures and movie/television stars as their role models. It is my opinion that, contrary to media depiction, for African American men chances of becoming a professional basketball player are less likely than becoming a professional businessman. However, academically successful African American men lack the visibility to attract the attention of younger African American men.

A three year study at Montay College in Chicago (Montay College, 1994 as cited in Endecavage, 2000) of young African American men in the two year liberal arts institution found no significant correlation between college success and economic background, family stability, standardized test scores, church attendance, or even high school grade point average. There was a relationship between high grade point average and college persistence. Endecavage also noted, "several students who should have not succeeded according to conventional wisdom successfully transferred to four year institutions to pursue a baccalaureate while several from middle class, two parent families, dropped out" (p.5). This suggests that there are factors contributing to college success other

than the presence of a two-parent home or a higher income. As previously noted, it is the intention of this study to examine these other factors.

### Importance of Education

Education is one of the means by which we socially and psychologically advance. In this society, it is commonly accepted that level of education is a substantial factor that improves our likelihood to secure a respectable and desirable job, our overall available opportunities, our financial security, the views held by others, and our self-efficacy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (1999), the unemployment rate for African Americans without a college education is 30.5% and that rate drops to only 11.7% at the college level. For Caucasians, the unemployment rate drops from 13.3% below college level to 6.4% at the college level. This suggests that the attainment of a college degree is of greater significance when obtaining employment for African Americans than Caucasians. Furthermore, in a study of successful African American men, Griffin (2000) indicated, "education became the key for them (28 successful African American men) to develop a stronger sense of self-esteem and, in turn, personal collective power" (p.69).

According to Blake and Darling (1994), education is an essential step for improving the social image of African American men. The current perception of African American men is poor. In order to change this perception, there must be an understanding and appreciation for African American men in college. They are in a position to refute the dismal image that is commonly represented in the news and media.

Since education plays such a substantial role in determining future success, African American men enrolled in college are being examined for this study. It is assumed that because they have taken the initiative to pursue higher education, that they are among those that are most likely to succeed. We are not necessarily examining African American men who are considered geniuses. Rather, we are examining African American men that represent the more general population that enroll in college, so that information obtained might be more applicable to the experiences of African American male adolescents. Yet, I feel that African American men who are pursuing education as a means to advance in society hold the key for younger African American men who must make the same decisions.

#### Influence of Role Models

In programs and institutions that are designed to help at-risk youth and juveniles, role models and mentors are identified as an integral and effective method of intervention. In an analysis of various programs that are designed to change youth high-risk behavior, Dryfoos (1991) found that many of these programs involved utilizing a "caring adult" to direct one or more children by providing support and acting as an advocate. According to Briscoe's (1997) research on at-risk youth, "Mentors can make a significant difference in a child's life by teaching pro-social conduct and permissible ways of problems solving and by acting as a role model and resource in developing problem-solving skills" (p.7).

The influence of a non-parental adult who is admired by an adolescent can actually override the influences of their parents and peers. In the Greenberg, Chen, and Beam (1998) study on the influences of the "very important" person (i.e. an older non-parental adult) on behavior and mood of the adolescents found "adolescents' perceptions of key attributes of their important nonparental adult were consequential for behaviors and mood even after similar attributes of family members and peers had been taken into account" (p. 339). Mentors, role models, or older adults can obviously influence the actions of adolescents whether it is done through actual teaching or modeling behavior. In Griffin's (2000) study of successful African American men, twenty-three of the twenty-eight men interviewed indicated that they used "adult controlled settings" (p. 80) to direct and shape their behaviors and goals. "The presence of role models and mechanisms of social control employed by adult mentors reproduced socially approved behavior in the settings" (Griffin, p. 80, 2000). Griffin found that there was the presence of one or more adult mentors that strongly influenced their development as adolescents in each of these men's lives.

Regardless of whether or not we identify African Americans as "high risk," the presence of a caring responsible adult can have positive influence on the development and achievements of African Americans. Moreover, given the current conditions facing young African American men it is imperative that something be done to ensure a successful future. Role models are a potentially an effective method to help to promote the success of African American male adolescents. Wilson (2000) indicated, "institutionalizing mentoring is a valuable

first step in reversing the trend of a questionable future for the Black males persistence in higher education" (p. 1). In addition, we must understand who and/or what compelled African American men to enroll in college in the first place. In an earlier study conducted by Taylor (1976 as cited in Taylor, 1989), involving thirty African American college men "revealed that the role model identifications of these youths were significantly related to the quality of integration of their psychosocial organization" (p. 156). This finding suggests that there is some significant influence that occurs between young African American men and their role models. Parker and Lord (1993) surveyed African American professional adult men on their opinions about what makes a good role model for young African American men. Three principal component attributes were described for a role model, which included: social profile (i.e. visibility and educational level), role values (i.e. level of responsibility to the adolescent and importance of rapport), and motivations (i.e. their reasons for acting as a role model and level of commitment). These were the characteristics that current African American leaders believed to be important for young African American men. "Although models of success are needed for young people in general, they are critically needed for young African American men and boys in this country today" (Parker and Lord, p. 97, 1993). Thus, we must understand the types of roles models African American men are currently using for support and guidance and the effects that role models have on them.

Conclusively, role models can play a significant part in directing the future of African American adolescent males. With this in mind, this study is attempting



to identify the characteristics of role models as reported by college African American men. This information will help us understand the types of role models of African American men currently enrolled in college. The justification for examining role models is based on the finding about the effectiveness of the use role models in programs designed to help at-risk youth and the research that emphasizes the importance of role models for young African American men's development.

## Methodology

### Participants

Ninety-four Ball State University African American Ball State male students completed the study. Thirty-two men were identified through the Ball State University football team, seventeen through the Black Student Association, sixteen from traditionally African American fraternities, nineteen from the Men of Color Forum, and ten were individually surveyed. Ninety-two were undergraduate and two were graduate students. A total of fourteen African American males were eliminated due to inappropriate or incomplete information, leaving a total of 80 that were actually utilized in the analysis. Of those used, the range of ages was 18 to 36, with a mean age of 20.79. In addition, two males who indicated "black/white" as their race, thirty-four Caucasian males, thirty-eight African American females, one Caucasian female, and two subjects who specified no race were deleted from the final sample, because the research was aimed specifically at African American men.

### Survey

The author-generated instrument was a thirty-question survey (Appendix A). Twenty questions were demographic and ten were about their primary role model. Demographic questions included items such as year in school, grade point average (GPA), social and athletic, community and religious activities, and family demographics and their educational level. For the role model questions, participants were given the following definition: "A role model is a respectable and responsible individual who provides positive inspiration by teaching and exemplifying pro-social conduct." This definition was based on a series of descriptions of both role models and mentors (Assibey-Mensah, 1997; Briscoe 1997; Dryfoos, 1994; Greenberger, Chen, Beam, 1998). Participants were then asked to indicate if they knew anyone who fit that definition. If so, the survey included questions about the role model's identity, sex, race, level of education, career, the level of closeness in the relationship, the frequency of interaction, and assistance he/she provided.

### Procedure

In both group and individual formats, the participants were given an introductory statement (Appendix B) informing them that participation was entirely voluntary and that their identity would remain unknown and information given anonymous. They were also informed that they would be completing an approximately ten minute survey about influences on their college choices and social support.

Upon completion, participants were given a debriefing statement (Appendix C). This statement included the title of the study, the name and how to contact the researcher and the faculty advisor, the intentions of the study (i.e. to study the influences of role models on plans for education), and the primary population (i.e. African American college males).

## Results

The purposes of this study were 1) to generate descriptive characteristics of the role models of African American college men, and 2) to determine whether there is a relationship between the influence of role models and the post-graduate plans for African American men.

Participants' GPA ranged from 1.00 to 3.50 ( $M=2.49$ ,  $SD=0.41$ ,  $N=75$ ). When asked about post-graduate plans, 41.3% planned to go to graduate school and 51.3% planned on starting a career (see Table 1.c). Frequencies were used to learn the characteristics of the role models of college African American men. Ninety-five percent of the participants reported that they had a role model based on the definition in the survey (Appendix A). Among those who reported a role model 30.0% identified that person as their mother, 21.3% as their father, and 10.0% identified their role model as an adult friend (see Table 2.a for role model identity distributions). Regarding role model demographic information, 90% were African American, 57.5% were male, 77.5% were currently employed, 28.8% had a Bachelor's degree and 18.8% had a graduate degree (see Table 2.b). The most frequently named services (Table 3.d) provided by role models for the

students were personal advice (92.1%), inspiration/motivation (88.2%), and decision-making (85.5%).

Cross-tabs were run to determine if there was a relationship between role models and plans for higher education for African American men. Specifically, the frequencies of interaction with role models were compared to post-graduate plans, showing significant results (Table 3.a,  $\chi^2=26.55$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $sig.=0.01$ ).

According to these results, the more frequently the student interacted with their role model, the more likely he was to indicate plans to go to graduate school. On the other hand, when participants were asked to describe the closeness of their relationship with their role models, no significant results were found (Table 3.b,  $\chi^2=15.43$ ,  $df=9$ ,  $sig.=0.08$ ). These differences may signify that the frequency of interaction with the role model does not necessarily determine the perceived closeness of the relationship between the student and role model.

Another significant result was found when comparing the fathers' level of education and students' post-graduate plans (Table 3.c). Apparently, if the father did not receive a college degree, the respondent was more likely to plan to work post-degree than to start graduate work. However, if the father had graduated from college or went on to obtain a graduate degree, then the respondent was more likely to have plans to go to graduate school instead of immediately beginning work post-graduation ( $\chi^2=6.89$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $sig=0.03$ ). This pattern was not found to be significant when considering mothers' or role models' level of education.

## Discussion

The population of African American men in college is one that is under-represented in research. This population is particularly special, because through examination they can provide valuable information for younger African American men. In order to improve the condition and image of African Americans in general, attention must be given to the successful groups of African American men. This research looks at these successful groups and adds to the literature that is intended to benefit all African American men. Unlike research that examines the negative experiences of African American, this research contributes to our ability to foster successful African American men. It is notable that 95% (N=80) of college African American men in this study indicated that they did have a role model. The fact that there is someone present in the lives of many college African American men who has somehow influenced them is encouraging; these role models should be researched to find out who they are and what kind of impact they are making.

The information collected from the research provides a better understanding of the types of role models African American college men are choosing. According to Park and Lord (1993), there is a lot of variation in beliefs regarding the types of role models that are effective for African American men. Many current programs are said to "lack clarity regarding the culturally relevant needs young African American men" (p. 98) when providing a role model. According to the results of this study, gender, race, and family relation all play an

integral part in determining the role models African American men college students select. Although the most frequently identified role model was a mother (30.0%), the gender of role models was mostly male (57.5%). In addition, almost all role models were identified as African American (90.0%). Demographically speaking, African American college men select role models who are similar to them. I would suggest that, when selecting a role model, it is best to choose one that shares common values and experiences with you. This seems to make the interactions and advice given by the role model more relevant.

#### Implications for Research

The results of this study raise questions about the messages and influences that younger African American men are receiving. These findings imply that there are differences in influences between African American men in college and those that are not. However, definite conclusions cannot be made until both groups have been thoroughly examined.

In addition to examining role models, other issues such as the father's educational level and single mother residence should also be examined. The percentage of college African American men raised by a single mother (see Table 1d, 61.3% were raised in single parent homes, 90.2% of parents were mothers) and the notion that college African American men identify mother as the most common role model (30.0%) warrants research regarding this influence. This might reaffirm the belief that single mothers are very capable of raising successful African American men. Also, more research on the achievements of fathers and their influence on the aspirations of their sons in the African

American family could render interesting findings. Based on the finding of this study regarding fathers' education and post-graduate plans, it very possible that there is an influence occurring between father and son (even if the father is not in the home). The subject may involve the notion of gender roles and their effect on successful African American men.

#### Implications for Training

The study also offers direction for programs that utilize role models and mentors that assist young African American men. There is a need for frequent interaction with role model seems to have an important impact on the aspirations of African American men. Also, both race and gender should be taken into consideration when pairing role models with African American adolescents. In addition, it is important to have these role models in place before African American men graduate high school in order to effectively direct the adolescent and provide support as they are growing up.

#### Limitations and Future Research

Limitations of this study exist in the low number of participants (N=80). Concrete conclusions could not be established without a larger representation of African American men. In addition, the sample was collected at a predominately White college. Attempting to gather a large population of African American men proved to be difficult. Instead, a convenience sample was used from various predominately African American organizations. The usage of these groups may have limited the scope of the study, because African American men not affiliated with these particular groups were not included. The results may have been

different if the data were collected at a college that is more representative of African Americans. Furthermore, African American men not in college or who had dropped out were not surveyed. This population may have provided more valuable information and served as comparative tool with men currently in college. Another limitation may have existed in the language of the survey. It is unknown whether participants interpreted and responded to survey questions for their intended meaning.

In order to more specifically differentiate the experiences of African American men, research should be done on the influences of role models of other race and gender populations in college, specifically Caucasian men and African American women. Group comparisons could then be made that might reveal differences and similarities that offer a better understanding of these populations' experiences and role models.

Also, research could examine the types of role models of African American male youth in high school. This information would provide an understanding about the differences in the educational level. Moreover, it would indicate whether or not younger African American men have role models, as defined in the survey (see Appendix A), and if so, the characteristics of their role models. Potentially, the types of role models reported or not reported might influence the prospect of African American male high school students' interest in pursuing a college education.

Another option is research involving African American men more advanced in level of educational. African American men at the doctoral and



masters level would represent a more advanced and concentrated population that might filter out the some differences between role models. This might provide a clearer understanding of the types of role models that motivate African American men to seek higher education. Then, researchers might investigate whether this type of role model is present at all levels of education and possibly predict whether a student is likely to continue education based on their type of role model.

### Summary

In closing, this research adds to the more recent research of successful African American men. These findings help add to the foundation and future direction of research regarding African American men in the United States. Role models play an important part in the socialization of young people. The role models for future successful African American men might be said to be already successful African American men. However it may be better concluded there is need for young African American men to be in frequent contact with someone that can provide positive guidance and support to ensure successful outcomes. In the future, more attention should be given to successful populations of African American men. Research should not only be informative, but it should supply methods to improve the current conditions of society. I believe that this research helps to do that for African American men.

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## Appendix A

## Survey

Please respond to the following questions (1-20) so that our demographics will be complete:

1. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male
2. Race: \_\_\_\_\_ African American or Black, non-Hispanic  
           \_\_\_\_\_ Asian American or Pacific Islander  
           \_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian American, non-Hispanic  
           \_\_\_\_\_ Latino/a, Chicano, or Puerto Rican  
           \_\_\_\_\_ Native American or American Indian or Eskimo  
           \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Year in school: \_\_\_\_\_ Freshman  
                               \_\_\_\_\_ Sophomore  
                               \_\_\_\_\_ Junior  
                               \_\_\_\_\_ Senior  
                               \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate
5. College Major: \_\_\_\_\_ College Minor (if any): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Current GPA: \_\_\_\_\_
7. When do you plan on graduating? \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. Month/Year)
8. After graduation, what do you plan on doing (e.g. going to graduate school, starting a career, other, etc.)?  
       \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you currently on any intercollegiate athletic team? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
    If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_ Baseball  
                                       \_\_\_\_\_ Basketball  
                                       \_\_\_\_\_ Football  
                                       \_\_\_\_\_ Track & Field  
                                       \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
10. Are you a member of any college social organization? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
    If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_ BSA, LSU, or AASA  
                                       \_\_\_\_\_ Fraternity/ Sorority  
                                       \_\_\_\_\_ Student Government Association  
                                       \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
11. Are you a member of any community organizations (e.g. Big Brothers/Big Sisters, M.O.M.S., NAACP, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
    If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Are you involved with any religious organizations (e.g. church, synagogue, etc.)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Is your permanent residence with both parents? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If not, with which parent is your permanent residence? \_\_\_\_\_

(If your permanent residence is not presently with a parent, please indicate your guardian prior to age 18: \_\_\_\_\_)

14. Number of brothers: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Number of sisters: \_\_\_\_\_

16. What is the highest level of education obtained by your mother?

\_\_\_\_\_ less than high school

\_\_\_\_\_ high school degree

\_\_\_\_\_ some college

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ graduate college degree (MA, Ph.D., MD, etc.)

17. What is the highest level of education obtained by your father?

\_\_\_\_\_ less than high school

\_\_\_\_\_ high school degree

\_\_\_\_\_ some college

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ graduate college degree (MA, Ph.D., MD, etc.)

18. How many of your brothers have attended college? \_\_\_\_\_

19. How many of your sisters have attended college? \_\_\_\_\_

20. How many of your immediate relatives have attended college? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please read the following description and answer the questions (21-30) in reference to this definition:**

A role model is a respectable and responsible individual who provides positive inspiration by teaching and exemplifying pro-social conduct.

21. Do you have at least one person in your life that fits this description?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, skip to Question #30

If yes, please answer the following questions about your primary role model:

22. My primary role model is my (check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ adult friend

\_\_\_\_\_ aunt

\_\_\_\_\_ brother

\_\_\_\_\_ father

\_\_\_\_\_ grandfather

\_\_\_\_\_ grandmother

\_\_\_\_\_ high school teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ mother

\_\_\_\_\_ religious leader (e.g. pastor, priest, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ sister

\_\_\_\_\_ uncle

\_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

23. My role model's current job or occupation is \_\_\_\_\_.

24. The highest level of education obtained by my role model is:

\_\_\_\_\_ less than high school

\_\_\_\_\_ high school degree

\_\_\_\_\_ some college

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ graduate college degree (MA, Ph.D., MD, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ unknown

25. The sex of my role model is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Female

\_\_\_\_\_ Male

26. The race of my role model is:

\_\_\_\_\_ African American or Black, non-Hispanic

\_\_\_\_\_ Asian American or Pacific Islander

\_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian American, non-Hispanic

\_\_\_\_\_ Latino/a, Chicano, or Puerto Rican

\_\_\_\_\_ Native American or American Indian or Eskimo

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)



27. I would describe my relationship with my role model as (check one):

- ☐ very close
- ☐ close
- ☐ somewhat close
- ☐ somewhat distant
- ☐ distant
- ☐ very distant

28. How often do you interact with your role model (check one)?

- ☐ daily
- ☐ a few times a week
- ☐ a few times a month
- ☐ a few times a year
- ☐ never
- ☐ other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

29. My role model provides me with (check all that apply):

- ☐ advice on personal issues
- ☐ career advice
- ☐ decision-making
- ☐ discipline
- ☐ educational advice
- ☐ emotional support
- ☐ financial support
- ☐ inspiration and motivation
- ☐ professional networking
- ☐ social networking
- ☐ other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

30. In your opinion, what was the greatest influence on your decision to go to college? (Please indicate below).

## Appendix B

### Introductory Statement

The study you are about to participate in examines the influences on educational choices. For this project, you will be asked to complete a survey about the influences on your college enrollment and experiences, as well as your social support. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice from the investigator. You will not write your name on any part of the survey and the information offered is entirely anonymous

## Appendix C

### Debriefing Statement

This research is for an undergraduate honors thesis entitled "The Relationship between Role Models and Plans for Higher Education for African American Men." The objective of this project is to discover the influence of role models on the college enrollment of African American men. The information gathered from the survey will be used to detect common responses from African American college males. These responses might indicate possible influences on college enrollment for this population. If you have any questions regarding the survey or study, please contact:

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## Descriptive Statistics

College African American Men Table 1.a-1.e

Table 1.a

Percent organizational involvement of college African American men (CAAM)

	Percent participation AA men reported "yes"
Intercollegiate athletic team (N=80)	43.3%
Member of college social organization (N=78)*	50.0%
Member of community organization (N=78)*	15.4%
Member of religious organization (N=80)	55.0%

Note: \*Valid percent reported.

Table 1.b

Distribution of Year in School of CAAM

	Frequency	Percent
Freshman	20	25.0%
Sophomore	13	16.3%
Junior	18	22.5%
Senior	27	33.8%
Graduate	2	2.5%

Note: N=80

Table 1.c

## Distribution of Post-graduate plans of CAAM

	Frequency	Percent
Graduate School	33	41.3%
Start Career	41	51.3%
Don't Know	3	3.8%
Other	3	3.8%

Note: N=80

Table 1.d

## Percent of Permanent Residence of CAAM

	Percent	Mother *(N=41)	Father *(N=41)	Other *(N=41)
Single parent (N=80)	61.3%	90.2%	7.3%	2.4%
Both parents (N=80)	38.8%			

Note: 4 entries missing that would indicate identity of single parent

Table 1.e

## Percent of Educational Level of CAAM

	Less than High School	High School Degree	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
Mother (N=80)	3.8%	31.3%	38.8%	17.5%	10.0%
Father (N=76)	7.5%	37.5%	22.5%	17.5%	8.8%

## Descriptive Statistics

Role Models Table 2.a-2.d

Table 2.a

## Distribution of Role Model Identity of CAAM

	Frequency	Percent
Mother	24	30.0%
Father	17	21.3%
Adult Friend	8	10.0%
Sibling	7	8.8%
Religious Leader	5	6.3%
Uncle	4	5.0%

Note: N=76, role models that accounted for less than 5% were not reported.

Table 2.b

## Distribution of Descriptives of the Role Models of CAAM

<b>Gender</b> (N=76)	Male 57.5%		Female 37.5%			
<b>Race</b> (N=76)	African American 90.0%	Asian American 2.5%	Caucasian 1.3%	Other 1.3%		
<b>*Employment</b> (N=73)	Employed 77.5%	Unemployed 3.8%	Retired 6.3%			
<b>Educational Level</b> (N=76)	Less than High School 5.0%	High School Degree 16.3%	Some College 23.8%	Bachelor's Degree 28.8%	Graduate Degree 18.8%	Unknown 2.5%

Note: \*% employment reported as "deceased" not recorded

Table 2.c

## Level of Interaction and Relationship with Role Models

<b>Interaction (N=76)</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Daily		11	13.8%
A few times a week		38	47.5%
A few times a month		20	25.0%
A few times a year		5	6.3%
Never		1	

<b>Relationship (N=74)</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very close		50	62.5%
Close		21	28.4%
Somewhat close		2	2.7%
Somewhat distant		1	1.4%

Table 2.d

## Services provide by Role Models for CAAM

	<b>Count</b>	<b>% Of Responses</b>	<b>% Of Cases</b>
Personal advice	70	12.3%	92.1%
Inspiration/Motivation	67	11.7%	88.2%
Decision Making	65	11.4%	85.5%
Emotional support	60	10.5%	78.9%
Discipline	59	10.3%	77.6%
Educational advice	58	10.2%	76.3%
Financial support	57	10.0%	75.0%
Career advice	52	9.1%	68.4%
Professional network	37	6.5%	48.7%
Social networking	37	6.5%	48.7%
Other	9	1.6%	11.8%
Total	571	100.0%	751.3%

Note: 4 missing cases; 76 valid cases

## Cross-tabs

Table 3.a-3.c

Table 3.a

## Frequency of Interaction with Role Model and Post-graduate Plans

How often do you interact with your role model?	Graduate School	Start a career	I don't know	Other	
Daily	6	5	-	-	11
Weekly	15	22	10	-	47
Monthly	8	10	1	1	20
Yearly	2	1	2	-	5
Never	-	1	-	-	1
Totals	31	37	13	1	75

Chi-square=26.55, df=12, sig=0.01

Table 3.b

## Closeness of Relationship with Role Models and Post-graduate Plans

How often do you interact with your role model?	Graduate School	Start a career	I don't know	Other	Totals
Very Close	22	26	1	1	50
Close	9	9	1	2	21
Somewhat Close	1	-	1	-	2
Somewhat Distant	-	1	-	-	1
Totals	32	36	3	3	74

Chi-square=15.43, df=9, sig=0.08



Table 3.c

## Father's Level of Education and Post-graduate Plans

Father's Level of Education	Graduate School	Start a career	Totals
High School Diploma or less	15	18	33
Some college	3	13	26
Bachelor's Degree or Graduate Degree	13	8	21
Totals	31	39	70

Chi-square=6.89, df=2, sig=0.03